

2. DEATH CRY OF TIGER

In my note on the above—Vol. 48, No. 1, p. 176.—I said I had not anywhere read of this cry having been recorded. I find that this cry was mentioned by Mr. W. S. Thom in his exhaustive article 'Tiger Shooting in Burma' published in Vol. XXXVII where he writes (p. 596) as to sounds uttered by tigers, 'I have heard them all, the cat-like call made by a wounded tiger on the point of death, a whine, a husky half suppressed kind of grunt, a snarl, a purr, a miaow and the "tak" referred to by Mr. Peacock in his book.'

BANGALORE,
3rd August, 1950.

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3. RABIES IN TIGER—TWO PROVED INSTANCES

In all the years of the Bombay Natural History Society since its foundation on the 16th September 1883, and the issue of the first *Journal* in January 1886, there has been no instance recorded of rabies in either tiger or panther. Now we have from Assam two proved cases of rabies in tiger, and a possible third instance. (*Calcutta Statesman* of 9th February 1946 and Miscellaneous Note by Mr. S. A. Christopher in Vol. 46, p. 391.)

There has also, so far as known to me, been no mention of rabies in tiger or panther in any of the more than 250 books published during the past 150 years on 'Big Game Hunting and Shooting in India and the East.' (Vol. 49, pp. 222-240.)

This is very strange, for it can be reasonably conjectured that cases must have occurred. Also one would think that panthers, being so partial to the killing of domestic dogs for food, would have been very many times exposed to possibility of contracting rabies through the fresh saliva of their prey. Possibly the known instances of tigers and panthers being found in the forests, and cause of death not apparent, were due to rabies.

First Case.—The narrative (condensed) of Mr. T. R. Clark, the then Manager of the Salonah Tea Estate in the Nowgong District of Assam, gives particulars of what happened.

'On the evening of 28 January 1943 one of three men cycling in the dark along the Salbari Road was attacked by a tigress (as it proved to be) and badly mauled. The two other men managed to drive off the animal, the cycle held up by one of them as a shield being bitten and clawed.

Further up the road some carts, carrying long mats extending well over the cart buffaloes, were attacked by the tigress which leapt from the bank at side of the road on top of the mats and was perched there for several yards. The men, sheltered by the long mats, managed to scare the animal away. Shortly after more carts carrying smaller mats came along. The tigress leapt on the buffaloes, dragged down one of the cartmen and badly mauled him. In the terrible confusion three of the men were seriously clawed and bitten, one of them suffering a fractured arm.

The cyclist was admitted to hospital early in the night and the cartmen were brought in about 8.30 next morning (29th Jany.) Not long after I motored along the Salbari road to see the places of attacks, and going on towards Langteng met Mr. Edwards, Assistant Manager, bringing in a woman and girl badly mauled on the road about 8.45 that morning. These having been admitted to hospital I sent Mr. Edwards to Nowgong, over twenty miles distant, with a letter to the Deputy Commissioner asking for elephants and shikaris.

About 2 p.m. a man cutting wood was brought in badly mauled. Later in the afternoon the Deputy Commissioner arrived, and Dr. Hugh Smith (Medical Officer, Nowgong Medical Association, Salonah) and I went with him to see the place where, it was just then reported, another woodcutter had been attacked. This was several miles distant from the previous place.

Arrived near the place it was getting dark so a lorry and other three men were obtained. With much difficulty the lorry was forced through as far as a small clearing, and after searching around for some time in the dark the man was heard to be faintly calling in reply. He was found to be badly torn, but conscious and sensible. The tigress could not have been far off, and having but a torch to show the way through rough scrub and jungle the party was rather helpless had the animal attacked, for firearms in such circumstances would have been difficult to use with proper effect.

At 6.15 next morning (30th) I went to Borghat to take two ladies to the railway station for the Darjeeling train. Passing through the estate labour lines it was found there was much excitement as the tigress had been seen in the vicinity.

Returning through the line with the ladies I stopped for information. Suddenly the chowkidar pointed, and there was the tigress quietly crossing the road about ten yards away and not even glancing towards the car! I rushed the ladies to the station, put them safely into the stationmaster's office, and then started off to get my gun from my bungalow and Dr. Smith with his heavy rifle. On my way I met Mr. Rogers of Amluckie Tea Estate who carried on to the station with his wife, who was also going to Darjeeling, while I proceeded to my bungalow. Mr. Rogers fortunately had his gun with him.

Now came the almost incredible climax. Arrived at the station Rogers got the luggage out of the Ford Vanette, turned the car round, and was sitting in the driving seat, his gun unloaded, when the tigress came walking along the road towards the car. He was unable to load the weapon in the confined space and could not risk getting out. The beast walked past, taking no notice of the car or of two bullocks tethered to a close-by cart. Rogers got out of the car, loaded his gun, and shot the tigress as it walked slowly and quietly away from him.

We learned later that the tigress had forced her way into houses in the lines; and in one instance, where a man with his wife and child tried to close the door against it, mauled the woman and child but did not attack the man.

The tigress was fully grown, perhaps three years old. Measurements were not taken, nor is there a photograph, which is a pity.

The brain was quickly removed and sent by train, held up for the purpose, to the Pasteur Institute at Shillong. Telegram 763 to the Medical Officer (Dr. Smith) reported '*Negri bodies in tiger's brain*' thus furnishing proof positive that the animal was suffering from rabies. (Note: *Negri* from 'negroid'—black bodies seen under the microscope.)

All the injured people were given anti-rabic treatment. Fifteen cases were treated in the hospital and eight of them died of their wounds. Two Mikirs (people of the Mikir Hills) and a Nepali woman were killed in the jungle. None of the survivors developed rabies. During the thirty-six hours of the 'terror' eighteen people were attacked of whom only seven survived. The cyclist, the first man to be attacked, died at the very moment the sound of the shot which killed the tigress was heard at the hospital. This coincidence quickly gave rise to much talk and conjecture among the superstitious!

Second Case.—In a letter published in the *Calcutta Statesman* of 6th May 1950, Mr. M. N. R. Kemp of Saikhoa Ghat, Assam, stated that a tiger had attacked a village during the night of 16th April 1950, and in a further letter published on the 20th May followed up with information that the brain of the tiger was reported by the Pasteur Institute, Shillong, to contain *Negri bodies*. It appears that the tiger went from house to house in the village, attacking, mauling, biting and going on to the next house. In all 14 persons were mauled of whom one, a woman, died at once and two others in hospital. One man was bitten in the upper arm and suffered a compound fracture of the humerus. His wife it was who was killed outright and the two elder children bitten, while a small baby was unhurt. The tiger was shot at dawn by a local shikari—the length 9 feet 4 inches.

It is understood that Mr. Kemp will be elsewhere publishing an account of all that took place.

Pasteur Institute Report

In his letter of 8th July 1950 to Mr. Clark the Director of the Pasteur Institute, Shillong, Dr. S. R. Pandit, who has held the same post since May 1942, mentions that he quite well remembers the above two instances of rabies in the tiger as he had examined and reported on the sections from both. He mentions also that he has submitted a note of these two instances of proved rabies in the tiger to the *Indian Medical Gazette*. This has not as yet appeared but will perhaps be in the *Gazette* for the month of December.

A Third Case.—The Miscellaneous Note by Mr. S. A. Christopher under the caption 'A Tiger "Runs Amok"' draws attention to an article relating that a tiger killed 7 coolies and was then killed in battle with a wild buffalo. Such an occurrence—seven men all killed at one spot in presence of other people, presumably in daylight in or near a village and a railway station, is certainly deserving of further enquiry. It has not been possible to get in touch with Mr. Christopher, and the place where the alleged incident took place not being known to me there is at present no further information available. On the face of it this seems quite likely to have been another case of rabies in the tiger.

How did the Tigers contract Rabies?

It is natural that people should wonder in what manner these tigers contracted rabies. As rabies virus cannot gain entry into the body other than through broken skin, and the virus has to be conveyed by means of *fresh* saliva, it follows that the two animals contracted the disease either by being bitten or wounded by some rabid animal; or (which is more likely) the virus in fresh saliva from some rabid beast they had killed, or fed upon, entered their bodies through some wound or abrasion, or some break in the skin of mouth or tongue. They may have licked the 'kill' and so licked fresh saliva and in that way have got the virus into their system. The smallest break in the skin would suffice, and that may have come about in a number of ways: a cut from a sharp bone on some part of lips or tongue; a scratch on the lips from a thorn; or any of many possible happenings.

Other peculiar Occurrences

Major A. St. J. Macdonald reminds me *in epistola* of several cases of tigers entering houses in a semi-conscious state, and refers to the account in the *Indian Forester*, a short version of which appeared in the *B.N.H.S. Journal*, Vol. 36. p. 235, to a happening in Upper Burma when a tiger walked into the Rest House by the front door, lay down, and afterwards got up and quietly left by the way he had entered. What was noticed more than anything else was the awful stench from the tiger's body and the swarms of flies even at that late hour of the night.

A third case, to which Major Macdonald was a witness, was that of a not fully grown tiger entering a cattle pen by day and lying down without paying any attention to cattle and calves tethered in the yard and in the shed. The animal was killed by spears while in a comatose state and found to be suffering from advanced blood poisoning as the flesh was of the colour of an over-ripe pear and highly oedematous. In this instance porcupine quills were the cause.

None of these happenings were occasioned by rabies.

BANGALORE.
16th September, 1950.

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4. THE 'DEW-CLAWS' OF THE HUNTING LEOPARD OR CHEETAH [*ACINONYX JUBATUS* (SCHREBER)]

I have not had the fortune to witness the sport of blackbuck hunting with aid of the cheetah. None of the accounts contained in shikar books are available to me just now so I turn to the 'Fauna of British India, Mammalia', Vol. I where the author, R. I. Pocock, F.R.S., describing the method of hunting from accounts available to him (for he will not have written from personal observation of the sport) says at page 329:

'The victim is usually apparently struck over by a blow of the Cheetah's fore paw, is then seized by the throat'